

**RAISED BILL No. S.B. 830 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN
OUTDOOR WOOD-BURNING FURNACES.**

Chairs Senator Ed Meyer, Representative Richard Roy, and Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Beth Terra. I come before you as a resident of the town of New Hartford, CT., a mother of a family of eight, a health care professional and a victim of outdoor wood burning furnace emissions.

This proposed Bill, if enacted is a much needed step in the right direction.

This is the third year in a row, I have come before you, seeking your help in protecting my family's health and the health of many others facing the same plight in the state of Connecticut. More specifically, my family and I are constantly being exposed to wood smoke generated by a neighboring outdoor wood burning furnace. It is a foul plastic smell that burns our eyes, nose, throats along with giving us all headaches, nausea, chest pain and respiratory infections.

It is very difficult to watch our four small children and elderly parents in their late eighties suffer from this noxious odor and smoke from our neighbors OWF. I just want to be clear that I am not against people burning wood in certified indoor wood stoves. This OWF burns differently than the indoor wood stoves.

We purchased our home seven (8) years ago, in a town that promoted many outdoor activities, protected state forests, conservation programs, clean air, many reservoirs and streams for swimming, kayaking, and fishing among other things. We moved to the beautiful town for the clean fresh air. I am concerned about the harmful effects that OWF have on the Environment. Three years ago a neighbor began utilizing an outdoor wood burning furnace. Shortly thereafter, my yard and interior of my home started becoming polluted with smoke and strong smells. On days with lower clouds, the smoke does not dissipate and remains at ground level. Perhaps you recall how it feels on summer days when the air is oppressive and hard to breathe. Imagine that with a smokey, eye irritating sensation, in February. I rarely let my children play outside now and when they do I have to have them come right in when the wind starts blowing the smoke thicker in our direction.

I contacted the town officials for help and spoke to zoning officials, the selectmen and also attempted to get the Fire Marshall involved. They all directed me to the State of CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). I subsequently filed a complaint with the DEP. Initially, DEP responded and found the outdoor wood furnace in violation along with permits that had not been obtained thru DEP or our town. It appears that they had a smoke stack that was too short on the furnace. The stack was increased in height, but we are still bombarded daily by the unhealthy emissions. The DEP directed me to call in a complaint every time we are under siege by the smoke and smell. I have complied by making complaints. I attempted to provide them

with photographs and video to substantiate my complaints, since they never respond timely, but they have refused to take my evidence. They have commented that the smoke is, "only at waist level" not ground level, so it is not considered a nuisance. My lungs and mouth are located above my waist so I am breathing in the foul smelling smoke and fumes.

The regulations however have not proven effective in protecting my property and health.

We even contacted real estate agents that have stated that we have to disclose the OWF next door and right now no one wants to purchase a home next to one. The value of our beautiful home and property are in jeopardy. While the owners of outdoor wood furnaces (OWFs) are explaining that they need to save a few thousand dollars on their heating bills - their neighbors are losing the entire value of their homes. The families that live near an OWF either have to stay in their wood smoke filled homes and become very sick - or - if they are lucky enough to be rich they can vacate their homes and move to a new one. Most of the people we have heard from neither have enough money to vacate, nor do they have a second home to go to.

I also do not want to move out of our home and beautiful property. We have the right to live where we want and breathe fresh air. I feel we are being discriminated against to move out. I myself have been told by a town official to move to West Hartford and another town official wanted to know if I was a "good old Yankee." Well, I am and this is not the wild wild west where people can do as they please since there is no law to uphold!

Since the installation of the outdoor furnace, my now 11 year-old, son who suffers from asthma has had increased visits to the pediatrician and has had to go on steroid and nebulizer treatments. Our newly adopted son is experiencing upper respiratory, throat and eye irritation as is the rest of the family. I myself have had continuous hacking coughs, headaches, newly cardiac condition and sinus infections on a regular basis due to the second hand smoke. We have all been treated and continue to be treated by our physician for these ailments, **that are preventable!** It is not a cold. It is similar to being exposed to second hand smoke on a regular basis.

It sickens me that I have to give my children tons of medications to help them breathe, treat their headaches and nausea, sore throats etc. The side effects of these medications are not something a mother likes to pump into their little children's developing bodies. It saddens me that they are awoken in the middle of the night, sometimes twice in one evening due to difficulty breathing, sore throat and coughing. What are we to do?

With nowhere else to turn, I even contacted the Farmington Valley Health Department for help. They have come out and smelled the foul odor, but are unable to take any action.

In connection with this Bill, some will present you with statistics on the rising complaints to DEP and town officials who constantly respond in kind to citizen complaints, that the state statutes are insufficient for them to take meaningful enforcement action. Others will explain that the outdoor wood burning furnaces are poorly designed and permits the emission of toxic fumes

into the air. Scientific reports will present you with a laundry list of the dangerous composition of the toxic fumes. But, I would hope that Attorney General Richard Blumenthals' public call for the outright ban statewide, of the use of outdoor wood burning furnaces in December 2009 should carry some weight in your decision process regarding this Bill. More specifically, the Attorney General stated that the same toxins and carcinogens found in cigarette smoke are also found in the outdoor wood burning furnace emissions at issue here. In the present day, those who avail themselves to the hazards of cigarette smoke have an option since there are current statutes to protect the public at large. However, we are being exposed to the same hazards not by choice, twenty-four (24) hours a day and seven (7) days a week.

I did not take on this task to fight to ban outdoor wood furnaces because I have nothing better to do, nor did I just take ones persons opinion on the issue. I have researched it and the scientist, toxologist and healthcare officials who have presented you with the data have nothing to gain by wanting these owf banned, but to protect the environment and everyones health and well being.

Please don't forget that it is not only a right to enjoy one's property, but is is also a health issue that is preventable.

As you will hear from proponents of the Bill, the state of Washington has banned outdoor wood burning furnaces. Closer to home, the more responsive towns of Granby, Tolland, Hebron, Woodbridge, South Windsor, Portland, Norfolk, Ridgefield, Haddam, Cheshire, West Hartford, Hamden, North Haven, and Avon, did not wait for your intervention and enacted their own municipal bans of the outdoor wood burning furnaces. Some residents are now the victims of unequal treatment, since some towns are banning the furnaces and some are not. We call upon you to take action and protect the health and welfare of all residents of Connecticut, uniformly across the board. Clearly, your actions will have an impact on medical expenses, future Health ailments and property value of ones homes that are situated near outdoor wood burning furnaces.

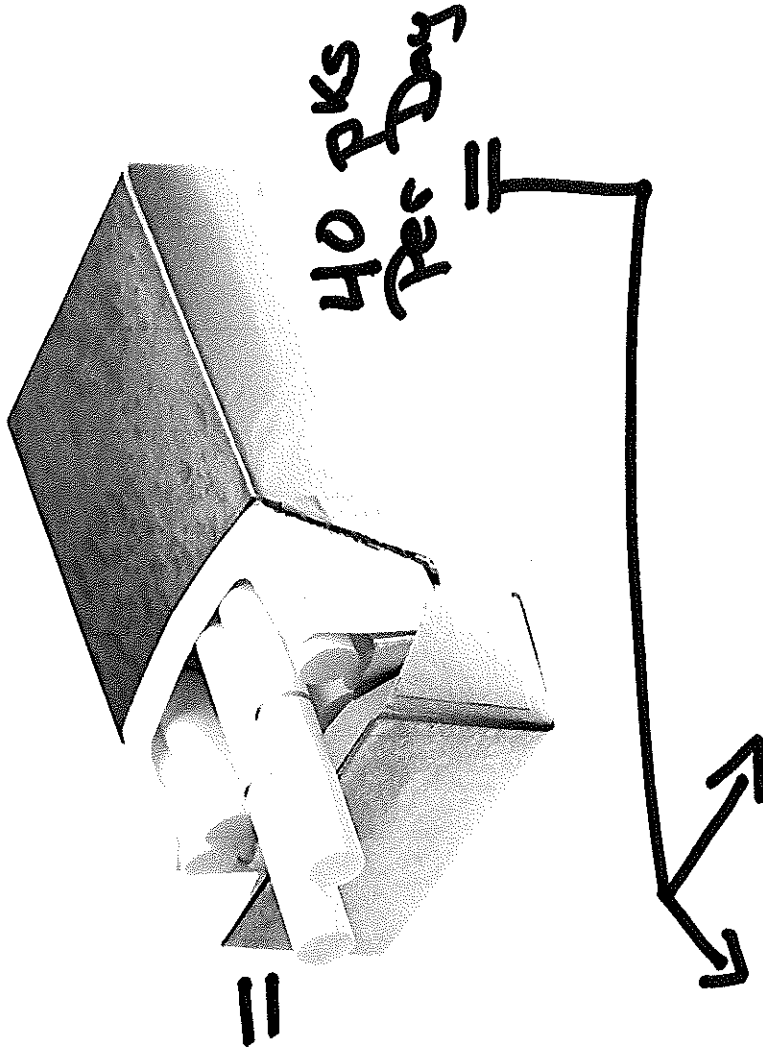
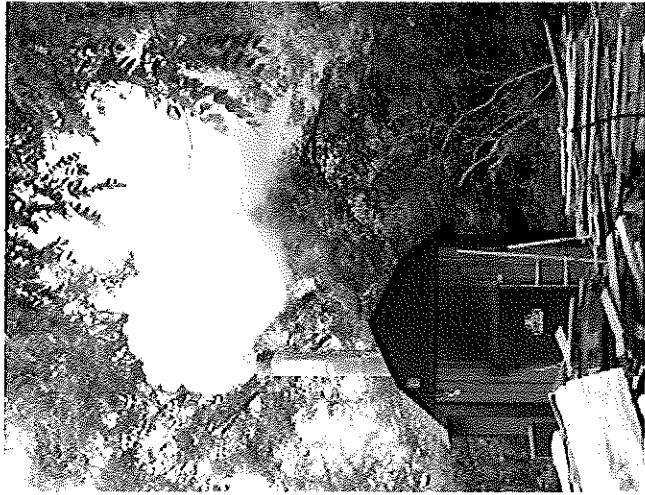
Our town of New Hartford along with other towns in Connecticut have placed a moratorium and have banned any new installation of OWF's and they are awaiting your decision that the state will ban OWF throughout connecticut.

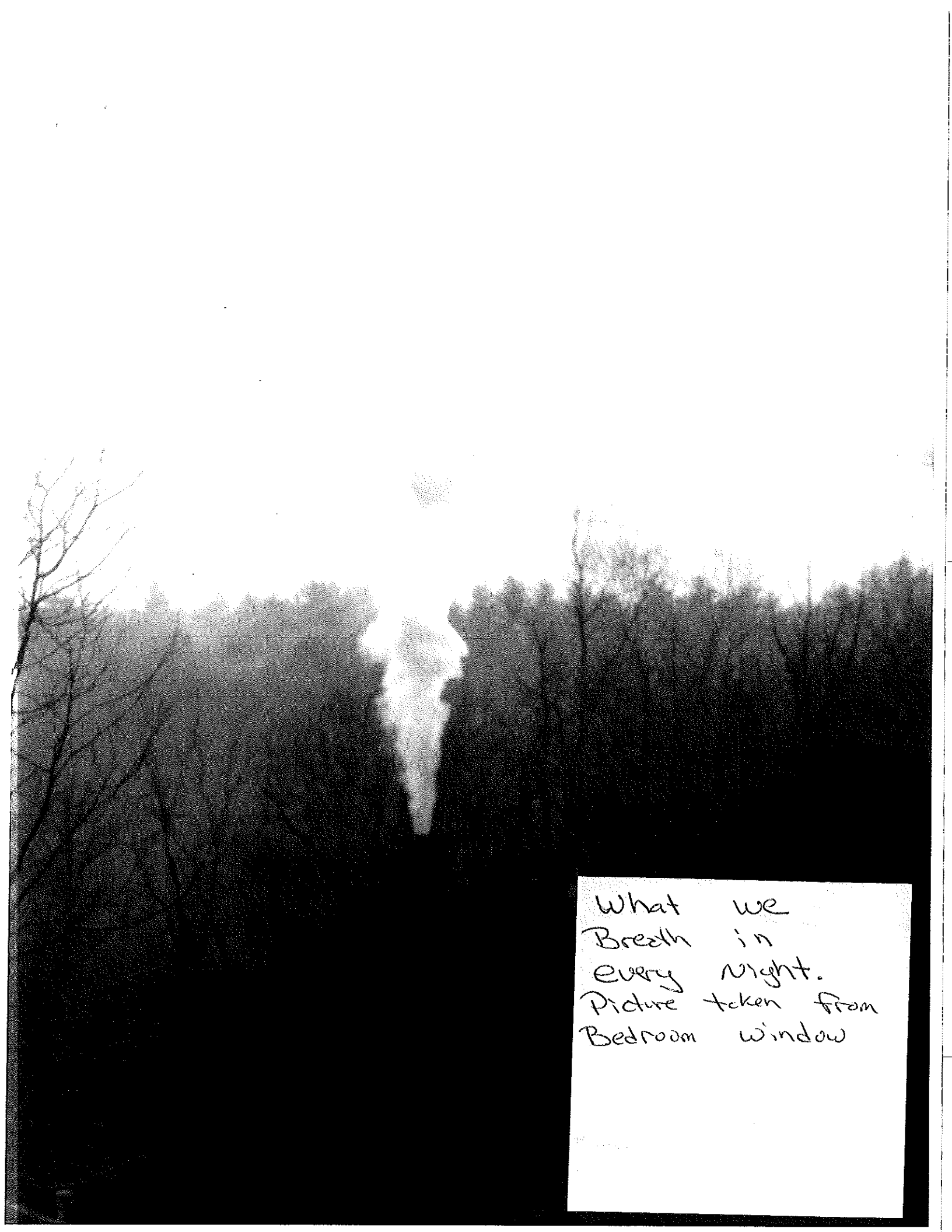
We call for your help and support in amending the nuisance code and enacting an outright ban on outdoor wood burning furnaces in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and any consideration in this matter.



Beth E. Terra, RN, BSW
312 Town Hill Road
New Hartford, CT 06057
02--9-2011





What we
Breathe in
every night.
Picture taken from
Bedroom window

What we
Breathe in
Every Day -
With the
Crisp
Smoke
Stack

